



ASHEVILLE TRANSIT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Police/Fire Training Room-Municipal Building
October 13, 2010 4:30-6:30

Attending:

Commission Members: Dave Erb, Tom Tomlin, Kevin Jenkins, Paul Van Heden, Julie Mayfield, Georgia M. Shannon, Councilman Gordon Smith.

Staff: Mariate Echeverry, Ken Putnam, Janet GeorgeMurr, Norman Schenck,

Community members: Ron Martin-Adkins, Brenda Whitmire, Detrick Morgan, Carrie Morgan

4:30 p.m.: Paul opened the meeting.

Agenda Amendments: *Under New Business:* Tom Tomlin would like to discuss bus stops. *Under Old Business:* Move to November agenda: Filling the open seat; *Under Staff Updates:* Add Grant Updates; Update on DWI of Greg Smith.

September 8, 2010 Transit Commission Minutes were reviewed by TC members. Julie motioned to approve the minutes and Kevin seconded the motion with all TC in favor.

Explanation of Public Comment Standards and Opportunities: Paul read the Explanation of Public Comment.

Welcome Public – Introductions and Pre-Meeting Public Comment

- Carrie Morgan – Route 16 reconsideration to have route continue into Woodridge Apts. Mrs. Morgan is handicapped with back problems and there isn't seating for handicapped. Also a lady was almost hit when crossing the street to the new bus stop.
- Brenda Whitmire commented that her husband is disabled and is requesting to keep Route 16 routing through Woodridge Apts.
- Staff and Transit Commission members introduced themselves.

Public Comment Part I: - none

All of the above listed community members who attended the TC meeting were opposed to Route 16 change and requested reconsideration of this change so that the bus route through Woodbridge Apts.

Paul stated that TC has discussed the safety issue and the staff is working on these important issues. Mariate stated that Transportation is exploring alternatives in reversing the route; but this would mean that several established Top-A-Stops and benches that are serving mobile home parks would have the same issue as Woodridge Apts. Sidewalks are being built on N Louisiana on the east side of the road going North. Transportation is working on an easements for a bus shelters or a bench on Bingham Rd. at the intersection of Keith Dr. or at least flattening the bus stop area and trimming the bushes on Bingham Rd. After a discussion among the community, TC and staff members, Paul stated that the staff is working diligently to improve the area to make it safe for crossing and comfortable for the passengers to wait for the bus.

Presentation – Paul introduced Dave Erb, Transit Commission member. In Dave's 30 year career as an Auto Engineering specifically on auto energy consumption. Dave discussed the four steps to get to sustainability in transportation:

1. Reduce VMT (vehicle miles traveled);
2. Use vehicles more productively;
3. Improve vehicle technology;
4. Shift to renewable resources.

The PowerPoint Presentation is available upon request.

Transit Commission members' experiences on ATS this past month:

- Dave had a good experience
- Paul stated that it was much better this month especially Route 12. Paul noticed that on Route 12 there are plenty of bus stops on the right side of Fairview Rd, but "hardly any on the other side of the road."
- Gordon indicated that he was happy to be in attendance at the TC meeting. There was not much trouble on Routes 1 and 9. He suggested that the bus drivers should be ambassadors as City representatives. The reason Gordon mentioned this was due to a bus driver who was complaining that money was wasted on the round-about. Gordon stated that the construction of the round-about was federally funded.
- Tom – Route 2 – on Thursday one week ago at 5pm, the bus was 12 minutes late and full. Tom complemented a lady who gave her seat to an elderly person. Friday night Route 52 at 10 pm trip the bus was "cramped" full of UNCA students.
- Julie asked Norman Schenck of First Transit if there are guidelines/policies for bus drivers carrying on conversation with passengers while driving. Norman stated that there are policies that bus drivers to speak with passengers at stopping places. Signs are posted on the buses requesting that passengers not speak with driver while bus is in motion. Signs are placed at the privacy screen behind the driver.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Consideration of rescheduling TC meetings to another day of the month:** Councilman Gordon Smith requested to have the TC meetings rescheduled for the first Tuesday of every month., The present TC meeting schedule is not suitable with Gordon's appointment schedule. Even though he receives information from the TC Chair and Vice Chair, Gordon would like to be a part of the group discussion. Gordon continued to say that if TC is not in agreement with the change in TC scheduling, it would be best to have another council member attend the TC meetings. The following suggestions were made by TC members:
 - Dave requested to not have the meeting later;
 - Kevin mentioned that he has another meeting at 6pm on the first Tuesday of every month. Kevin suggested moving the TC meetings to 4pm to 5:30 pm. That TC Gordon is a strong advocate for transit and that we should try to accommodate him with the rescheduling of TC monthly meetings.
 - Georgia suggested trying the new date and time on a trial basis.
 - Norman mentioned that since the new scheduling would be at the first of the month that the ridership stats will not be as accurate until the middle of the month. Those TC members should be aware of this information.

Paul motioned: On a six month trial basis, to reschedule the TC meetings to the first Tuesday of every month, beginning December 7 from 4-6pm.

- **Review the consolidation study by TC and give recommendation to council:** Kevin stated the consolidation study was commissioned and paid for by NCDOT. City Council is then planning to review the study and then direct TC to review it for red flags and report back to Council. The report would consist of an implementation plan written in a conceptual context with an aggressive timeline. It is fair to say that DOT foresees a consolidated service. Gordon stated that he attended the Buncombe County Commission meeting where the commissioners receive the document; they did not make a resolution to support or NOT support the consolidation. The commissioners said they were simply accepting the plan and it would be placed on the shelf for the time being. Gordon sent the Consolidation document to Council to review. The budget will be slimmer this year and the study is requesting a lot of money. The study does not address the implementation of the Transit Master Plan. The consolidation study discusses the opportunity for coordination between the COA and Buncombe County in regards to routes across the county. Julie asked what the reason is for the consolidation. Kevin stated that this is a tough question. Gordon also stated that the consolidation is important. Kevin stated this is a good opportunity for the COA and Buncombe County to set the groundwork for improved transit services for the future of our area. Paul stated that this is a good opportunity, but no new resources for funding. He suggested the vehicle license tag tax as a resource for funding the consolidation. Paul stated that Henderson County's reaction to the consolidation was not pleasant. Norman mentioned that consolidation would deplete ATS's current funding. Julie asked if the staff could do an analysis of the study for November's meeting. Mariate stated that COA Transportation Department participated in the consolidation process and that if TC had a list of specific questions, staff would be happy to provide more information.

- **Resolution to expressing support for PR firm to push the envelope:** Paul commented that he worked for COA, Transit Division in marketing. That COA has general ideas that using twitter and facebook is not recommended by COA. Paul stated that whoever COA hires to do the PR, they should be creative and take risks and be given the opportunity to explore new and fresh ideas. He thought that TC should encourage PR firm to push the envelope to explore new technologies as they see fit. TC recommends that COA staff allow and encourage new technology. Gordon said that in order for staff to push the envelope they would need to be given the opportunity to pilot new marketing strategies. After a discussion among the TC members, Mariate stated that the resolution that is was being considered by TC would not have any impact on the PR firm bid. It is the staff that will be directing the parameters for the PR firm as delineated in the contract. It is more important for the staff to be open to changes and to do the best we can with the money that we have. Mariate continued to say that there is an opportunity to pilot new marketing strategies already included in the marketing bid such as: Social Media tools; Communication tools; Authority to operate semi-independently, i.e. stand alone website or own colors and brands. A poll was taken among the TC as to which TC members would encourage staff to push the PR envelope as follows: 3 Yes (Tom, Paul and Julie); and 3 absentee (Dave, Georgia, Kevin).
- **Update on RFP Marketing Peer Review Committee:** Paul stated that the meeting was rescheduled to 10/26/10 and will not be discuss at this time.
- **How Transit Commission members can help support the staff in making upcoming route changes?** Julie stated that she and Mariate had spoken regarding route changes in January and suggested that the TC members go out into the community supporting the Transit Master Plan (TMP). Therefore, Julie proposed to TC that each member pick a route and be available to attend neighborhood meeting so that citizens can be heard. The TMP stands as approved by Council. The following dialog among the TC members occurred:
 - Paul felt that the decision has been made regarding Woodridge Apts and the staff will make the bus stops comfortable for the passengers.
 - Julie feels that another voice for Transit Master Plan (TMP) from the TC members will helpful.
 - Kevin was regretful that Route 18 would not happen in January.
 - Mariate stated that Transportation is trying to accommodate everyone and that they will look at the specifics. Changes are scheduled for 1/20 to the Dial A Ride.
 - Mariate stated that Route 8 for the Dial A Ride was cancelled.
 - Georgia stated that Route 8 remains the same.
 - Julie stated that we must "face the music" and be a sympathetic voice, but the TMP was approved by Council, which will be better for some and worst for others.
 - Tom mentioned that the TMP public hearings were 2 years ago. This was a long time ago and he suggests another hearing prior to the implementation or we will receive complaints.
 - Julie stated that education before it happens is the best approach.
 - Mariate stated that a public meeting will be scheduled to explain the changes with maps, but that the public comment period already occurred with the TMP.
 - Paul asked if there are other routes with problems i.e. Route 1 & 9 (Pisgah View Apts); Route 16 & 8.
 - Mariate noted that at the next TC meeting staff will present routes to TC that we are ready to implement and then other others in December.
 - Julie stated that TC members should plan to attend meetings in November and December associated with these changes.
 - Mariate suggested attending the Shiloh Association meeting and Pisgah View Apts meeting.
 - Georgia suggested calling a meeting at Woodbridge Apts to discuss the changes and not "beat around the bush."
 - Julie agrees with Georgia to go to Woodridge Apts to further explain the changes.
 - Mariate mentioned that the public meeting would be helpful.
 - Julie suggested that attending the areas that are having problems with the changes.
 - The TC members will split up and schedule meetings through the Transportation Department, with the following areas:
 - Gordon, Kevin, Georgia and Julie at Pisgah View Apts.
 - Paul volunteered to meet with Route 16 and 8.
 - Mariate stated that she will inform TC members regarding Pisgah View Apts.

- **Bus Stops:** Tom stated that he learned that after November 14 the buses will no longer stop at Charlotte and Edwin. Tom indicated that passengers are already walking a good distance to catch the bus and now even further. He suggests keeping the bus stop at Edwin and Charlotte since there is a crosswalk. Mariate stated that one of the problems is that there are too many stops which are too close to each other. Once the changes are in place and maps are produced with the times this will be very beneficial to riders. Mariate mentioned that the best practices are for bus stops to be 800 to 1600 feet considering sidewalks, safety and ridership. Mariate stated that there are bus stops on each block on Charlotte St. Tom stated that eliminating 6 out of the 8 stops on Charlotte is too extreme and recommends leaving the outbound on Edwin St.

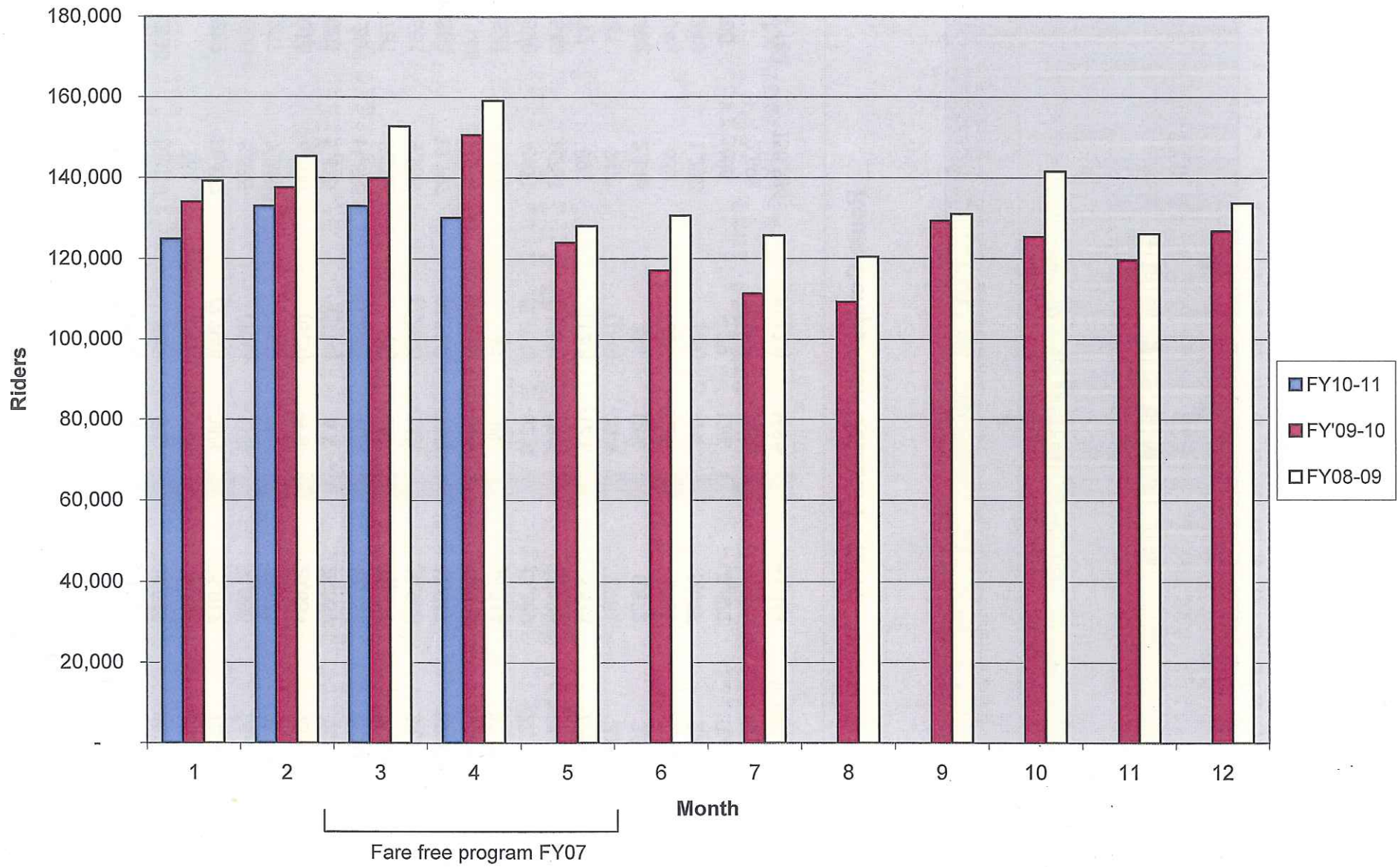
OLD BUSINESS:

- **Mountain Express response letter to Greg Watson:** Paul read the letter in which he responded to Mountain Express.
- **Filling the open seat:** This issue is continued until November.

STAFF UPDATES:

- **Black Mountain Route:** Mariate informed the TC that there are no updates at this time. Transportation applied for JARC funding which will end 12/31/10.
- **Ridership:** Attached
- **New Grants:** Mariate announced that Transportation received another grant for 1.5M under the "State of Good Repair" grant. This money was for the purchase of 4 buses, but, could not use, due to the fact that all the buses under this grant are only for replacement of old buses and COA has already identified funding for the replacement of old buses, but not new ones. All of this replacement bus money is from other grants that have been applied for and received. At the time when staff applied for the State of Good Repair grant, other grants had not been confirmed. Mariate is hopeful that the funds can be used later to replace 2006 buses depending on FTA rules.
- **Update on Greg Smith of ATS on DWI:** Continued
- **RFP Marketing:** Mariate stated that the RFP Marketing firm selection will be before City Council on 10/26. It had been on City Council's September agenda but was moved to November. This will further delay the implementation of the route changes. Internally, there are three stages to the marketing:
 1. Operational changes;
 2. Release of basic materials;
 3. Marketing campaign (Spring 2011).
- **MEETING SUMMARY:**
- Announcements, events, transit commission members' involvement related to transit.
 - Nothing discussed
- **Agenda items for 10/13/10:**
 - Consolidation study update
 - Update on routes
 - Paul suggestion of preparing future TC agenda on Google.
- **Adjourned:** 6:51 pm

Ridership Comparison



OCTOBER

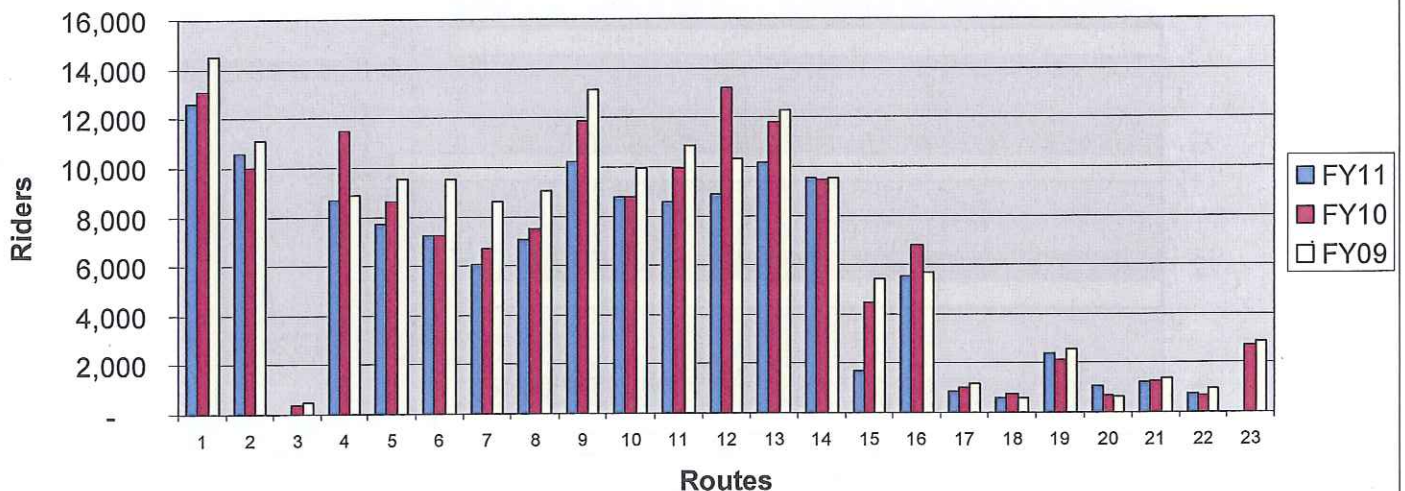
FY10-11

Current Month

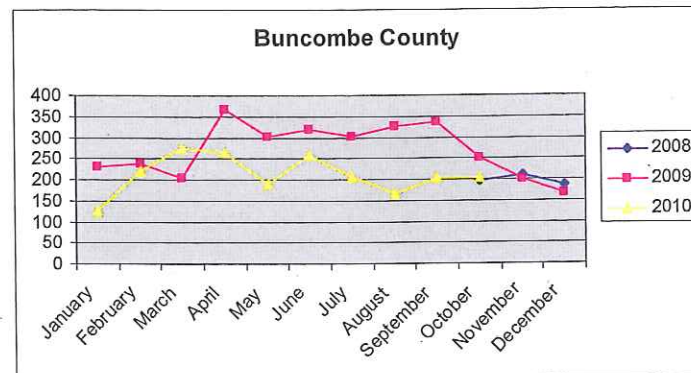
Fiscal Year to Date

Route	This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta		This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta
1	12,610	13,089	(479)	-4%		50,020	39,230	10,790	28%
2	10,595	10,010	585	6%		39,568	36,151	3,417	9%
3		364	(364)	-100%		1,236	21,170	(19,934)	-94%
4	8,682	11,472	(2,790)	-24%		35,017	12,592	22,425	178%
5 & 16	7,685	8,635	(950)	-11%		34,395	24,412	9,983	41%
6	7,237	7,249	(12)	0%		29,631	25,322	4,309	17%
8	6,075	6,700	(625)	-9%		25,633	23,029	2,604	11%
9	7,061	7,475	(414)	-6%		28,359	22,371	5,988	27%
11	10,208	11,875	(1,667)	-14%		42,733	26,871	15,862	59%
12	8,781	8,788	(7)	0%		34,421	31,456	2,965	9%
13	8,561	9,953	(1,392)	-14%		36,960	28,195	8,765	31%
15	8,883	13,197	(4,314)	-33%		42,947	32,726	10,221	31%
18	10,143	11,819	(1,676)	-14%		43,644	30,692	12,952	42%
26	9,521	9,476	45	0%		36,214	32,739	3,475	11%
28	1,690	4,451	(2,761)	-62%		15,260	22,142	(6,882)	-31%
29	5,540	6,783	(1,243)	-18%		22,125	17,067	5,058	30%
36	872	992	(120)	-12%		3,873	12,633	(8,760)	-69%
38	561	747	(186)	-25%		2,781	2,872	(91)	-3%
41	2,402	2,146	256	12%		9,172	3,523	5,649	160%
46	1,049	689	360	52%		3,151	5,525	(2,374)	-43%
51	1,243	1,292	(49)	-4%		5,077	2,693	2,384	89%
52	765	686	79	12%		2,672	3,460	(788)	-23%
54		2,698	(2,698)	-100%		8,159	4,613	3,546	77%
Total	130,164	150,586	(20,422)	-368%		553,048	461,484	91,564	20%

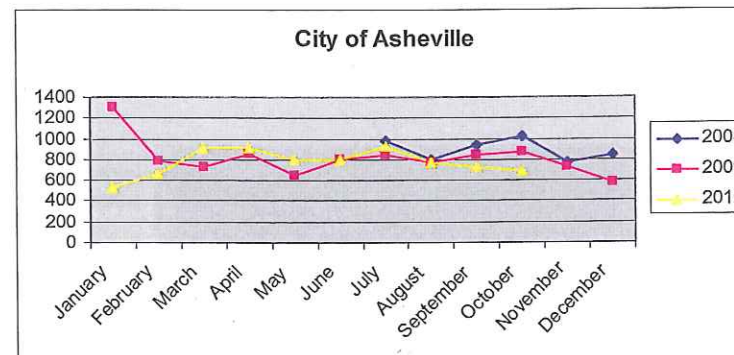
Route Comparison October FY10-11



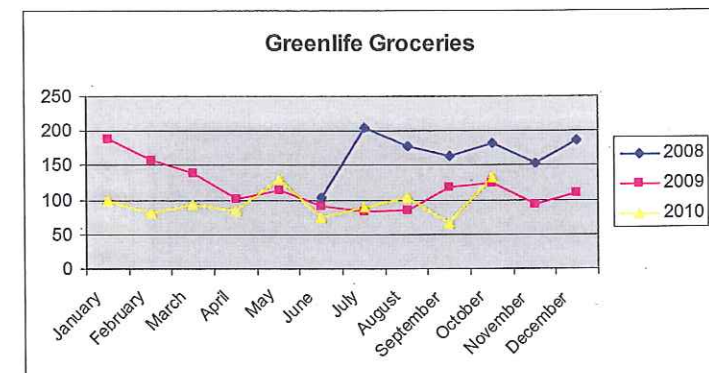
Buncombe County			
	2008	2009	2010
January		231	127
February		236	222
March		204	275
April		366	264
May		302	189
June		319	259
July		301	208
August		324	167
September		334	203
October	195	251	205
November	209	199	
December	187	165	
Year Totals	591	3232	2119
Overall Totals	5942		



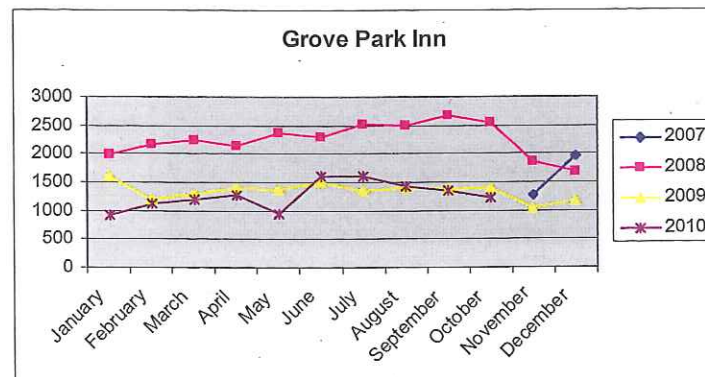
City of Asheville			
	2008	2009	2010
January		1306	530
February		779	664
March		733	916
April		850	906
May		643	794
June		793	804
July	976	838	926
August	797	774	767
September	940	844	733
October	1018	873	680
November	770	735	
December	835	575	
Year Totals	5336	9743	7720
Overall Totals	22799		



Greenlife			
	2008	2009	2010
January		188	100
February		156	80
March		138	94
April		101	85
May		113	131
June	103	90	75
July	205	82	88
August	177	84	103
September	164	117	66
October	181	125	133
November	152	93	
December	185	109	
Year Totals	1167	1396	955
Overall Totals	3518		



Grove Park Inn				
	2007	2008	2009	2010
January		1993	1592	913
February		2156	1198	1119
March		2225	1305	1205
April		2128	1386	1268
May		2356	1366	942
June		2298	1509	1610
July		2520	1345	1609
August		2494	1387	1432
September		2659	1376	1344
October		2552	1410	1231
November	1268	1863	1042	
December	1969	1676	1167	
Year Totals	3237	26920	16083	12673
Overall Totals	58913			



UNCA					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
January		2433	3140	4777	2020
February		2860	4041	4562	3346
March		3536	3346	3554	3335
April		3163	3906	3891	3433
May		2010	2870	1803	2248
June		1529	2882	1253	2129
July		1816	2692	1677	1890
August		3611	5336	3118	3013
September		4512	6755	3897	4663
October		4881	6169	3935	3774
November	1285	3452	4444	3234	
December	1754	2443	3649	2124	
Year Totals	3039	36246	49230	37825	29851
Overall Totals	156191				

